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ABSTRACT

The Center for Enhancement of Education organizes seven specialized centers within the School of Education and Human Services to provide faculty and students with the opportunity for research, development, and public service activities that complement and supplement classroom teaching. Each of the seven centers stresses one of the following functions: (1) provide assessment and training of the disabled for independent living; (2) apply technology to help individuals with disabilities in solving or alleviating vocational and other problems; (3) offer marriage and family counseling and psychological assessment and counseling; (4) collect, develop, and disseminate information in vocational rehabilitation; (5) serve both disabled individuals and industry in placement and retention of the disabled; (6) conduct research and short-term training on issues related to transitional, sheltered, and alternative employment models; and (7) provide assessment services for persons with disabilities. The centers allow students to experience a full range of professional experiences and provide a stimulating environment for faculty growth and development. They also provide direct services to individuals in need. All are fiscally self-sustaining and are gaining international recognition. (MSE)

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Centers for Enhancement of Education

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AASCU/ERIC Model Programs Inventory Project

The AASCU/ERIC Model Programs Inventory is a two-year project seeking to establish and test a model system for collecting and disseminating information on model programs at AASCU-member institutions--375 of the public four-year colleges and universities in the United States.

The four objectives of the project are:

- To increase the information on model programs available to all institutions through the ERIC system
- To encourage the use of the ERIC system by AASCU institutions
- To improve AASCU's ability to know about, and share information on, activities at member institutions, and
- To test a model for collaboration with ERIC that other national organizations might adopt.

The AASCU/ERIC Model Programs Inventory Project is funded with a grant from the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education to the American Association of State Colleges and Universities, in collaboration with the ERIC Clearinghouse on Higher Education at The George Washington University.

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ABSTRACT

The Center for Enhancement of Education at the University of Wisconsin-Stout organizes a number of operational centers within the School of Education and Human Services in such a way that students can receive practical experience in research, development and clinical service that relate directly to classroom instruction. Both graduate and undergraduate students are involved in various center activities that result in more than 8,000 student contact hours annually.

The specialized management structure has allowed the centers to serve as a unique resource to all students and faculty in the School and not just individual departments; thereby, enhancing the total educational experience offered by the School. Centers hire highly specialized staff who participate with faculty in planned systematic integration of center activities into classroom instruction and faculty development. For example, numerous faculty not only teach, but also work within a center(s), a system that allows faculty to remain current in their profession and maintain active contact with the field. Staff specialists from the centers lecture in classes, conduct laboratory sessions, supervise student practicums and internships, and advise student research papers. Thus, student learning is enhanced via information dissemination through classroom instruction and through student participation in knowledge development (e.g., research, materials preparation); and application (e.g., services, technology designing), etc. These multidimensional aspects of the centers' programs are coordinated in a systematic way, under a facilitating umbrella management structure, that allows faculty and students to move from text-book theory to realistic problem solving through research, development, and service.

It is also unique that all centers are primarily fiscally self-sustaining with students and faculty closely involved in maintaining financial solvency, a program activity which closely mirrors the real world. The centers are supported by a variety of resources, including grants and contracts, fees for services, sale of publications, and private contributions. All centers have a mix of the above fiscal elements which provides for maximum program flexibility, coupled with on-going program accountability.

INTRODUCTION

This document describes how a School of Education and Human Services with approximately 60 faculty and academic staff, operating within a small public university of 7200 students, organized several operational centers to provide faculty and students the opportunity to experience research, development, and public service that compliments and supplements classroom teaching.

The document outlines the work of the individual centers, the management structure, sources of funding, breadth, and depth of scope, and impact.

BACKGROUND

The organization of the Centers for Enhancement of Education resulted from the perennial concern of universities that students might receive too much theory based knowledge and not enough practical experience. Coupled with this was the desire on the part of faculty to do more of its teaching through the process of coaching. Many of the professional staff assigned to research and service roles also saw this as an opportunity to work more closely with students on a day-to-day basis.

DESCRIPTION

Most universities provide practical educational experiences to students via laboratories and off-campus field placement. The School of Education and Human Services at UW-Stout uses both teaching methods but has gone beyond these approaches by also involving students in the work of seven specialized centers. The centers work with research, technology, information and materials development and dissemination, and clinical services and, in addition, serve as adjuncts to the educational departments, providing

innovative and excellent educational opportunities for students and faculty.

Both graduate and undergraduate students are involved in various center activities, generating more than 8,000 annual student contact hours. The special centers are:

- Center for Independent Living, which provides assessment and training of the disabled for independent living,
- Center for Rehabilitation Technology, which applies technology to help individuals with disabilities in solving or alleviating vocational and other types of problems,
- Clinical Services Center, which offers marriage and family counseling and psychological assessment and counseling,
- Employer Assistance Center, which serves as a collection, development, and dissemination center for information and practical how-to manuals in vocational rehabilitation,
- Projects With Industry, which offers service both to industry and to disabled individuals, stressing placement and retainment of disabled persons,
- Research and Training Center, which conducts research and short-term training on issues related to transitional, sheltered and alternate models of employment, and
- Vocational Development Center, which provides assessment services for persons with disabilities.

The centers cover the full range of professional experiences. This includes practice in applying classroom academics in professional settings; participation in professional research projects; exposure to, and involvement with, newest technological developments; professional materials development and utilization; and participation in state-of-the-art clinical service delivery processes.

The centers provide a stimulating environment for faculty with continuous opportunities for professional growth and development. They also provide direct service to individuals with special needs; to state and local

agencies; to business and industry; to practicing professionals; and to other educational institutions.

Through these centers, the School of Education and Human Services keeps actively involved in community service; in on-going staff development; in generating new knowledge for the professions; and in preparing students to apply academic studies to the world of work. Through the School's management and coordination of these centers and their use of the traditional laboratories, a comprehensive learning support program has been created.

Staff specialists from the centers lecture in classes, conduct laboratory sessions, supervise student practicums and internships, and advise students on research papers. Thus, student learning is enhanced not only in the classroom but also through participation in research, materials preparation and application.

All of the centers are essentially fiscally self-sustaining. Students and faculty are closely involved in maintaining financial solvency. Support is drawn from a variety of resources, including grants and contracts, fees for services, sale of publications and private contributions.

The national status of the centers' programs can be demonstrated through the amount of federal monies being awarded the programs for research, materials development and service (more than $20 million since its inception, almost $2 million in 1986); the number of publications being distributed annually (approximately 28,908 in 1986); and the number of professionals throughout the United States requesting short-term training from the centers (approximately 1,342 in 1986).

International impact is exemplified by the number of faculty who have participated in various international activities including teaching, research

and consultation; the number of international professionals who have visited the program in varying capacities; the number of international students who have studied here; and the number of publications that have been requested internationally. Publications have been translated into at least seven different languages.

Excellence and quality education have been, and continue to be, the hallmark of Stout's School of Education and Human Services. The centers represent more than simply seven separate projects and 37 individual faculty; they are part of a philosophical concept that an organizational program that demonstrates the School of Education and Human Services' dedication to supporting exemplary educational practices and experiences.

RESULTS

This program has been on-going for nearly twenty years. No formal evaluation has been made during that time. However, informal reports from both faculty and students indicate a high level of interest and utilization. The various center activities generate in excess of 8,000 student contact hours annually.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Centers for Enhancement of Education continue to function successfully because they operate to the benefit of both faculty and students. Students continue to voluntarily involve themselves with one or more centers because they want practical experiences in research, development, and service activities. Center faculty continue to work with these students because it provides them with assistance and produces the opportunity to work with

students on a regular basis.

The viability to replicate this program would depend upon the potential of any university to operate multiple, self-sustaining centers that focus on activities related to academic programs.